



# Motorcoach Task Force

January 14, 2009  
Old Town Civic Association



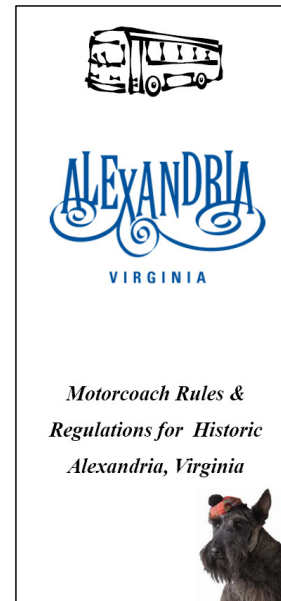
City of Alexandria, Virginia

# Agenda

- Background
- About the Task Force
  - Primary Issues and Citizen Input
- Recommendations & Framework
  - Short-term/actionable items
  - Long-term management
- Next Steps & Process
- Q&A

# Background

- Primary season March-June with range of estimates for # of coaches visiting
- 6 loading/unloading locations, 2 short-term parking, 1 long-term (w/fee)
- No routes, idling unclear (15 minutes), little guidance
- Previous efforts to address motorcoaches



# About the Task Force



- Appointed by City Manager in May 2008
- 15 members
  - 5 residents
  - 5 business/industry
  - 5 from City Council and Staff (Mayor Euille, Councilman Smedberg, Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, T&ES and Police)

# About the Task Force: Charter & Mission

Working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders, the Task Force will develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management that recognizes the economic value of the industry and balances its operational needs with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, historic resources, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking. The Task Force will review best practices and build consent on measures that balance the multiple interests of the City with regards to the public health, safety and welfare of the community. Ultimately, the Task Force will recommend a motorcoach management plan to City Council.

# About the Task Force

- Compare motorcoach operations in Alexandria with other cities to review opportunities and constraints
- Incorporate input from residents, industry and local business to ensure a balanced set of interests are addressed
- Develop primary issues and use a solutions-based approach to make short-term and long-term recommendations for motorcoach management



# About the Task Force: Key Issues



Lack of designated routes puts coaches on sensitive streets/safety (short-term)



Lack of short-term & overnight parking (short-term and long-term)



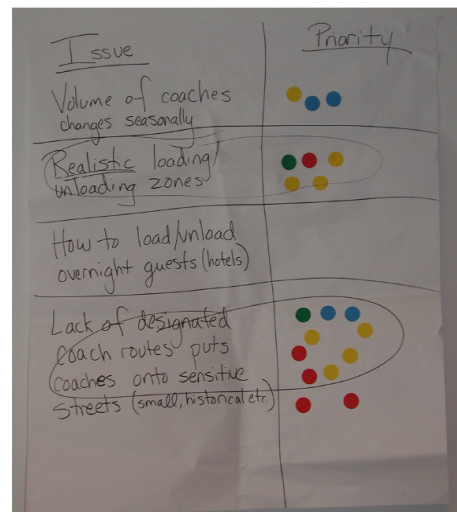
Enforcement (short- and long-term)



Loading & Unloading (short-term)



Communications/Education (short-term)



# About the Task Force: We're Listening to OTCA and Citizen Input

- OTCA “Statement of Constraints”
- Membership meeting on October 8
  - Idling, Crawling, Too Many Buses, Size, Noise, Signage...
- Additional civic association input
  - Old & Historic Residents Group
  - Tobacco Quay, Founders Park, North Old Town Independent Citizens



## Rectifying Short & Long Term

- Focus on where we agree
  - Enforcement
  - Education/Communications
  - Minor route, loading & parking improvements
- Institute incremental changes
- City getting into motorcoach management

# Long-Term Management

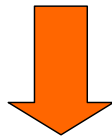
- Registration/Permitting
- Fees
- Regulatory Authority to Manage Motorcoaches
- Caps (limits on volume of Motorcoaches)
- Limiting pass-through coaches
- Parking
- Encouraging Walking Tours
- Central Transfer Point/Visitor Center
- “Right-sizing” buses for trip type

# Framework for Motorcoach Management



# Guiding Principles for Framework

- Citizens seek more regulatory regime but not eliminate all motorcoach traffic
- Tourism & motorcoach-related business is critical to the long-term health of Alexandria



1. System must include fee-based registration
2. Voluntary at first – but authority within 2-3 years
3. System must limit impacts from certain trip types
4. System must use criteria to identify routes that provide access & disperse impacts across street grid

# Proposed 2010 Framework

- Registration/Permitting System
  - Access to system possible via Internet for hotels, restaurants, destinations
  - Centrally managed by City
  - Presupposes some type of standing commission or advisory group with residents, industry & staff

## Proposed 2010 Framework

- Initial system will be voluntary (1-2 years), after which industry will join City in petitions to Virginia General Assembly for Alexandria to attain regulatory authority to legally manage motorcoaches

# Proposed 2010 Framework: Motorcoach Trip Types (“Buckets”)



1. Hotels
2. Buses Bound for Unloading/Loading east of Washington
3. Sightseeing Buses w/Step-On Guides
4. “Pass-Through” Buses

# Proposed 2010 Framework

## 1. Hotel-Bound Buses

All buses bound for hotels must register. Hotels not on designated routes will be provided a route. Drop-off/pick-up allowed on hotel property or at designated areas.

## 2. Buses Bound for Loading/Unloading/Parking east of Washington Street must register.

- a) Buses dispersed onto one of multiple routes depending on destination
- b) In 2010, no limit on # of buses that can register
- c) System must be simple to use
- d) Registration to involve a fee structure that favors local companies
- e) Hours for entry/exit to Old Town will be established. After XX pm, entry or exit to Old Town only allowed on King Street
- f) Buses must prominently display registration in window

# Proposed 2010 Framework

## 3. Sightseeing Buses

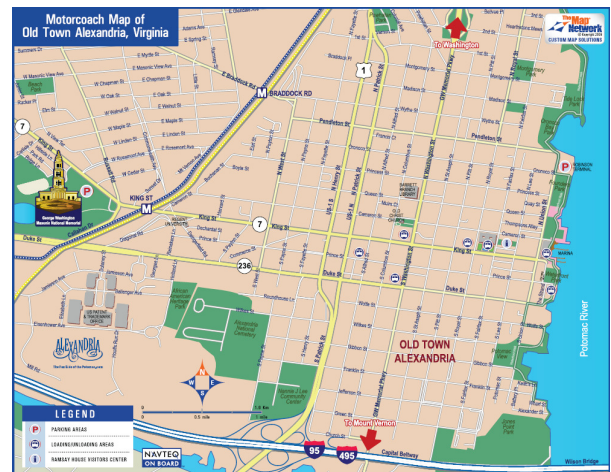
- a) Buses w/Alexandria-based step-on guides may get extremely limited # of permits

## 4. Pass-through Buses

- a) Buses that do not register must stay on Washington Street (or Rte. 1)
- b) Additional loading/unloading may be made available on Washington Street at King Street during peak season only

# Routes: Designate & Disperse

- **Criteria:**
  - Functional Classification
  - Adjacent Land Use
  - Street Width
  - Turning Radius & Presence of Parking/Blind Spots
  - Presence of Landmarks/Attractions
  - “Walksheds” & Activity Centers
  - Existing Transit Route (Trolley, DASH, MetroBus...)
  - Access to Commercial Interests & Existing Parking



# Unresolved Issues

- How to Refine the Motorcoach Trip Types (ie. the different “buckets”)
- Smaller Vehicles
- Designated Routes

## Small Size Buses



- Mitsubishi “Rosa”, Zonda Medium Size Passenger Bus
- Range of sizes: 24-27’ long, 6-8’ wide, 8-10’ high
- 20-30 person capacity
- Cost varies tremendously (\$23,000 to over \$200,000 for used buses)

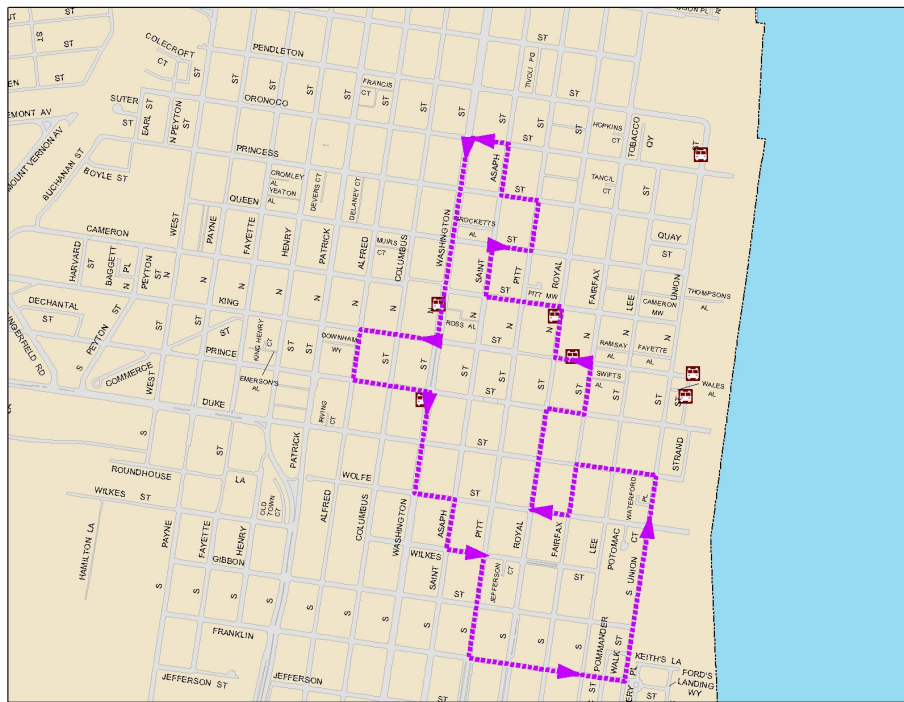
## Small Size Buses

- A future possibility for some trip types
- Jitney/transfer system needs more study
  - Precedent exists but in many respects it is also a “reinvention of the wheel”
  - Unanswered questions about feasibility & funding
  - Use motorcoach management system to promote and further study this option

## Framework >> Bottom Line

- In the short-term >> Enforcement of existing code only
- Compliance will require cooperation of industry & residents
- Use methods of dispersal to reduce impact and provide access to businesses
- Seasonal approaches
- Sightseeing routes remain problematic

# Sightseeing Routes?



# Short-Term Recommendations

1. Appoint an advisory committee to oversee the future management of motorcoach operations in the City.
2. Instruct staff to conduct counts of motorcoach operations in Alexandria from March through June. A longer-term goal will be to implement an on-line motorcoach registration system by March 2010 to include fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips.
3. Permanently designate the unit block of King Street one-way westbound and The Strand (between Wales Alley and King Street) one-way northbound to allow for safer traffic flow and provide better motorcoach management.
4. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term (2 hour) motorcoach parking with limited hours and seasonality. Spaces on Jamieson Avenue will provide new short-term motorcoach parking in addition to 2-hour existing spaces on North Union Street at Robinson Terminal.
5. Designate new 30-minute parking spaces in the following locations and under the following conditions:
  - Two spaces at 112-118 North Washington Street
  - Two spaces at 110-112 South Washington Street
6. Instruct the Alexandria Police Department to more aggressively enforce existing city ordinances with respect to motorcoach traffic and collect/report data related to motorcoach violations.
7. Continue funding the Alexandria Police Department in its motorcoach management efforts on the unit block of King Street.

# Process

- Community Meeting with full Task Force at 7 pm on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at Lyles-Crouch Elementary
- TF meetings in February to finalize recommendations & long-term framework
- City Council on February 24
- Implement short-term recommendations in time for peak 2009 season (March-June) and begin work on long-term management w/ working group or advisory committee

# Questions & Discussion

[www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach](http://www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach)

Thank you.

Rich Baier, P.E.

Director, Dept. of Transportation &  
Environmental Services